

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3817

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, US

SUBJ: SYRIAN PRESS COMMENT ON PEACE NEGOTIATIONS FOLLOWING
KHADDAM'S RETURN FROM WASHINGTON

1. JUNE 25 DAMASCUS PRESS REPORTED THAT FONMIN KHADDAM HAD
MET WITH PRESIDENT ASAD JUNE 24 AND SUBMITTED REPORT OF HIS
TALKS IN WASHINGTON, LONDON AND PARIS.

2. COLUMNIST MAHMUD KAMIL IN UNUSUALLY THOUGHTFUL ARTICLE
IN JUNE 25 AL-BAATH SUMMARIZED BASIS OF CURRENT SYRIAN
STRATEGY TOWARD STEP-BY-STEP NEGOTIATIONS. HE DECLARED THAT
SYRIAN POLICY WAS BASED ON TWO PRINCIPLES: WITHDRAWAL FROM
OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES AND GUARANTEE OF PALESTINIAN
RIGHTS. SYRIAN DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY TO FURTHER THESE PRINCIPLES
"DOES NOT OFFER IN ITS INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS ANY
SURPRISES" OR UNEXPECTED DEVELOPMENTS OF SORT INTERNATIONAL
PRESS "PASSIONATELY FOND OF ANTICIPATING."

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3. KAMIL ASSERTED THAT SYRIA HAD GIVEN "INTERNATIONAL ENDEAVORS" EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO IMPLEMENT UN RESOLUTIONS CALLING FOR TERRITORIAL WITHDRAWAL AND GUARANTEE OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS. "EXPANSION OF OUR CIRCLE OF FRIENDS AND OF UNDERSTANDING OF OUR POSITION HAS BEEN THE PIVOT OF SYRIA'S POLITICAL WORK", HE SAID.

4. TURNING TO STEP-BY-STEP DIPLOMACY, KAMIL EXPLAINED "SYRIA'S INTERPRETATION OF STEP-BY-STEP DIPLOMACY HAS BEEN THAT IT SHOULD COMPLETE ONE QUESTION AFTER THE OTHER, THAT IS, WITHDRAWAL MUST BE COMPLETED FIRST AND THEN THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE MUST BE SETTLED. IN ITS INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS, SYRIA PRESENTED THIS VIEWPOINT AND INSISTED ON IT." HOWEVER, KAMIL STATED, ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF STEP-BY-STEP DIPLOMACY HAVE NOT MEASURED UP TO EXPLANATIONS WHICH SYRIA RECEIVED WHEN PEACE EFFORTS WERE INITIATED. INSTEAD OF THE STEP WHICH SHOULD HAVE OCCURRED IN REASONABLE AMOUNT OF TIME, "PROCRASTINATION AND POSTPONEMENT" HAVE RESULTED. MOREOVER, STEP ON IMPORTANT ISSUE HAS BECOME MERELY MINI-STEP ON "SECONDARY AND PARTIAL QUESTIONS WHICH HAVE NO POSITIVE BEARING ON THE GENERAL SITUATION." KAMIL CONCLUDED THAT DELAYS HAVE GIVEN ISRAEL OPPORTUNITY TO EXERCISE "MANEUVERS INTENDED TO INFLUENCE ARABS TO OFFER CONCESSIONS AND NEGLECT THEIR RIGHTS."

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